

Kyrgyzstan election competitive, although concerns remain, say observers



Azay Guliyev, with Artur Gerasymov, delivers the post-election statement at a press conference in Bishkek, 16 Oct. 2017.

The International Election Observation Mission to Kyrgyzstan wrapped up its work Monday with a press conference in Bishkek. Special Co-ordinator Azay Guliyev (MP, Azerbaijan) delivered the mission's statement of preliminary findings and conclusions, noting that the 15 October presidential election contributed to the strengthening of democratic institutions by providing for an orderly transfer of power from one elected president to another.

The election was competitive, as voters had a broad choice and candidates could generally campaign freely, although cases of the misuse of public resources, pressure on voters and vote buying remain a concern, the observers said. Other issues identified by observers relate to secrecy of the vote, access for persons with disabilities, undue restrictions on media freedom, and the legal framework for campaign financing.

"Kyrgyzstan has demonstrated a generally positive example for holding competitive elections and a peaceful transfer of power, but some concerns remain," said PA Vice-

President and Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observer mission Azay Guliyev. "I look forward to engaging with Kyrgyzstan on the issues we have identified, including on strengthening the legal framework for campaign financing, improving secrecy of the vote and curbing vote buying."

Ukrainian MP Artur Gerasymov, who served as Head of the OSCE PA delegation, said: "This election was an important benchmark for the Kyrgyz Republic. New technological advances surely contributed to increased confidence in the election process, but there is still work to be done in improving the voter register. I hope that the positive developments we have seen will serve as the basis for a consolidation of democracy in this country and in the region."

The overall mission consisted of nearly 400 observers from 43 countries, including some 300 long-term and short-term observers deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR, a 37-member delegation from the OSCE PA, a 23-member delegation from PACE, and an 11-member delegation from the European Parliament.

Observers had two days of briefings by election administrators, political parties, civil society and media representatives in Bishkek before deploying for election day. Guliyev and heads of missions met with President Almazbek Atambayev on Monday following the press conference. The OSCE PA's mission was supported by Iryna Sabashuk, Farimah Daftary, Nat Parry and Stephanie Koltchanov from the International Secretariat.

Second Committee Chair Nilza Sena's visit to Vienna explores areas of co-operation

OSCE PA economic and environmental committee Chair Nilza Sena visited Vienna this week to participate in the OSCE Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting (EEDIM) and held a series of bilateral meetings to exchange ideas about the priorities of OSCE countries and build relationships with key stakeholders in the second dimension. She addressed the EEDIM on Tuesday, speaking on the topic of implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Stressing the importance of meeting the SDG targets in order to alleviate poverty, promote gender equality, and combat climate change, Sena noted that environmental and economic challenges can lead to other security concerns including terrorism.

While in Vienna, Sena met with the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Kazakhstan to the OSCE, Ambassadors Radomir Bohac and Kairat Sarybay, respectively. She also met with the Deputy Head of the Austrian Delegation for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, Andreas Stadler and Second Dimension expert of the Austrian Task Force, Dr. Berndt Forster. On Wednesday, she met with the Deputy Head of Mission of the Italian Delegation, Luca Fratini;

Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities Amb. Vuk Zugic, Deputy Co-ordinators Ermelinda Meksi and Ralf Ernst; Senior External Co-operation Officer in the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, Emiliano Alessandri; and Senior Adviser in the Office of the Secretary General, Mary Albon.



Nilza Sena addresses the EEDIM in Vienna on 17 Oct.

Meetings focused on areas of engagement between the PA and the OSCE's governmental side, including on energy, connectivity, cybersecurity, climate change, and greening the economy. The meetings also provided an opportunity to inform counterparts about the OSCE PA's work on second dimension issues and explore avenues for promoting OSCE commitments through concrete joint initiatives.

Sena's visit to Vienna was supported by Marco Bonabello, Francesco Pagani, and Katerina Koci from the OSCE PA Liaison Office.